



## Maryland Department of Disabilities - Press Release

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Ensuring Individuals with Disabilities are Prepared for an Emergency or Bio-terrorism Event

BALTIMORE, MD (April 21, 2005) -- The Maryland Department of Disabilities is co-sponsoring a conference on *Emergency Preparedness and Response for Individuals with Disabilities* in Baltimore City on April 28, 2005. This regional conference will provide training and technical assistance on appropriate emergency preparedness and planning for individuals with disabilities in Maryland's communities.

"Since 9/11, we've realized how important it is to develop emergency preparedness plans that consider the needs of all Marylanders," said Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. "Through tremendous cooperation among several state and local agencies, we've moved ahead with statewide training and have taken the lead on this issue. We're committed to including individuals with disabilities in the strategic planning and coordination process since they understand better than anyone their unique needs."

During the last six months, six regional conferences were held in Hagerstown, Wye Mills, La Plata, Columbia, Cockeysville and Rockville.

"We are pleased that consistent with all the homeland security activities currently being conducted in the state, individuals with disabilities are included and are participating in activities that impact all of us," said Secretary Kristen Cox of the Maryland Department of Disabilities.

Individuals being invited to participate include people with disabilities, their families, service providers, advocacy organizations, government agencies, business leaders and emergency planning and response personnel.

Conference activities will provide an opportunity to identify specific needs of individuals with sensory, cognitive, mobility and behavioral/mental health challenges, and offer an opportunity to share with the responder communities the expertise that individuals with disabilities possess related to their needs during an emergency.

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Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr., Governor ~ Michael S. Steele, Lt. Governor  
Kristen Cox, Secretary ~ Diane McComb, Deputy Secretary